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DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
LANSING

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DIRECTOR'S OFFICE MEMORANDUM 2008 - 8

EFFECTIVE: Immediately

DATE: April 28, 2008

TO: Executive Policy Team
Administrative Management Team
Wardens

FROM: Patricia L. Caruso, Director

SUBJECT: Birth Certificates

One of the difficulties prisoners face after parole or discharge is the inability to obtain a driver's license or Secretary of State personal identification card due to the lack of acceptable documents. DOM 2008-3 "Issuance of Identification Cards to Prisoners Paroling/Discharging" addressed this problem in part through the issuance of approved identification cards which parolees and discharged prisoners may use as one form of identity verification to obtain a driver's license or personal identification card. Additional documentation, however, is needed to show permanent legal presence in the United States in order to obtain a driver's license or personal identification card.

One of the acceptable documents to show permanent legal presence is a birth certificate, which prisoners rarely have in their possession when released. The purpose of this Director's Office Memorandum is to set forth a formalized process at various stages of the prisoner's incarceration by which s/he may obtain a birth certificate and have it stored by the Department until his/her release; however, this assistance shall be available to prisoners as needed throughout their incarceration.

The Records Administrator, Central Records Section, Operations Division, Correctional Facilities Administration, shall ensure specific instructions are issued as soon as possible but no later than 30 calendar days of this Director's Office Memorandum identifying where birth certificate applications may be obtained and how to process the applications. The Manager of the Finance Division, Bureau of Fiscal Management, Operations Support Administration, shall similarly ensure specific instructions are issued identifying how to process disbursement authorizations and loans for payment of application fees. Except as otherwise set forth in this Director's Office Memorandum, staff shall begin complying with requirements set forth in this Director's Office Memorandum as soon as possible after receipt of these instructions.

Reception Processing

Whenever a prisoner is received at a reception facility (or at Marquette Branch Prison for transfer to a reception facility) with a birth certificate, social security card, driver's license, or Secretary of State personal identification card, the document(s) shall be retained in the prisoner's Record Office file until

the prisoner transfers to Community Residential Programs (CRP), paroles, or discharges. The receipt of these documents shall be documented in writing; the prisoner also shall be provided a receipt for these items. This requirement takes effect May 1, 2008.

As part of reception processing at a reception facility, housing unit staff or transcase/reentry classification processors as designated by the Warden shall meet with each prisoner identified as a United States citizen and review and complete a Documentation Verification Request form (CSJ-489) with the prisoner, including answering questions the prisoner has on the need for having a valid driver's license or personal identification card in his legal name upon release from incarceration. If the prisoner knows where his/her birth certificate, social security card, driver's license, or Secretary of State personal identification card is, and the document is not already being stored by the Department for the prisoner, the prisoner shall be told that the Department will store the document(s) for him/her if the document(s) are mailed by the person in possession of the document directly to the Central Records Section in Jackson. The Records Administrator shall ensure that documents received for storage are promptly forwarded to the appropriate facility, where they shall be stored in the prisoner's Record Office file for delivery to the prisoner when s/he transfers to CRP, paroles, or discharges.

If a prisoner indicates that s/he does not have a birth certificate or does not know where it is located, designated housing unit staff or transcase/reentry classification processors shall offer to assist the prisoner in obtaining a copy of the birth certificate. For prisoners born in Michigan, copies shall be obtained through the Vital Records Division of the Department of Community Health; copies from other states or countries shall be obtained from sources identified by the Records Administrator. If the prisoner wants to obtain a copy of his/her birth certificate, designated housing unit staff or transcase/reentry classification processors shall obtain the required application and complete it for the prisoner's signature, obtaining input from the prisoner as necessary. (The completed application shall indicate that the birth certificate is to be mailed to Central Records Section in Jackson and not directly to the prisoner.) Designated housing unit staff or transcase/reentry classification processors also shall assist the prisoner as needed in completing a Disbursement Authorization (Prisoner) form (CAR-893) for the application fee; a prisoner who lacks sufficient funds to pay the application fee shall be loaned the remaining funds required to pay the application fee.

Designated housing unit staff or transcase/reentry classification processors shall submit the CAR-893 and completed application to the appropriate business office for processing of the application fee or debt. Funds removed from the prisoner's account shall be paid into a centralized payable account in TAPS. Business Office staff shall forward the application and a copy of the CAR-893 to the Central Records Section in Jackson, which shall be responsible for processing the application and fee payment. The Central Records Section also shall be responsible for coordinating the receipt of any additional information or documentation required for processing the application. When the birth certificate is received by the Central Records Section, it shall be forwarded to the appropriate facility for retention in the prisoner's Record Office file. The prisoner shall be advised in writing when the birth certificate has been received at the facility.

Preparation of PER

When a PER is being prepared for a prisoner, the PER preparer shall review the previously completed Documentation Verification Request form with the prisoner to determine if the information is still accurate and note any corrections. Unless all the documents are being stored for the prisoner by the Department, the prisoner shall again be advised of the process for having documentation stored for

him/her by the Department. If a Documentation Verification Request form has not yet been completed, the PER preparer shall review and complete the form with the prisoner in the same manner as set forth above for reception processing. In all cases, if the prisoner does not have a birth certificate, the PER preparer shall assist the prisoner in obtaining the birth certificate in the same manner as required during reception processing. The completed application and fee payment shall be processed in the same manner as required during reception processing.

Reentry Services at Inreach Facilities

As part of the reentry services provided at inreach facilities, staff shall review and/or prepare a Documentation Verification Request form with the prisoner and assist the prisoner in obtaining a birth certificate, if needed, in the same manner as required at the time the PER is prepared. (This is in addition to any other reentry services being provided to locate and obtain necessary documentation.) The completed application and fee payment shall be processed in the same manner as required during reception processing.